

Cruise Industry Hits Further Heights in Europe



Ask people what a cruise holiday means and most will reply "relaxing pensioner holidays", "Caribbean fun for newly-weds" or "paradise for rich Americans". The days of such stereotypes seem to be dwindling as the industry is taking off rapidly in Europe. There were record numbers of European cruisers last year and an extra 30 ships are set to be built by the year 2010. Europe now has 20% of the world's cruise market, second only to the Caribbean. One of the reasons for this is that more and more young people are taking to the ocean. Over one million under 18's cruised last year, the high total thought to be due to the increased amount of attractions available on board.

Cruise line companies now offer spa treatments, teenage discos, video arcades and kid's Karaoke. It is of course true that the parents tend to pay for these trips, yet they are always going to want their children to enjoy themselves. Furthermore, the Internet has begun to play a vital role in the industry. One particular site, Cruisecomplete, sold tickets to over 24.000 passengers last year for Europe-based trips. This site has been advertising new attractions available on European ships. For example, after the introduction of giant trampolines and ice skating rinks, a bowling alley has now been introduced on the Norwegian Pearl. It has been ironically suggested that a roller coaster will be next on the list of marketing ideas. The result of this success is that Europe now accounts for €8.3 billion of the industry's direct expenditure, a figure expected to increase by 50% by 2010. 180.000 jobs are filled by the European cruise line industry and passengers spend an average of \$100 at each port they visit.

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